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The earlier identification of mental health problems in children and young people in primary care using their linked GP-hospital records

Background Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disorder affecting 3–5% of the population of children and young people (CYP). CYP with mental health problems report long delays in the diagnosis of mental health problems. ADHD is recognised in just under 1% of children and young people in English primary care and qualitative work suggests that parents (carers) report to their GPs prior to obtaining a diagnosis of ADHD but a detailed knowledge of reasons for presenting to health care is lacking.

Aim To ascertain the reasons for attendance to health care for CYP with compared to CYP without ADHD.

Method Using the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD) with linked Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES) data, all medical records for CYP with ADHD were extracted. Up to five CYP without ADHD were selected at random matched by age, sex, and GP practice. All GP and hospital medical records were extracted and inspected in the 2 years prior to the date of diagnosis of ADHD in the index case.

Results There were 8135 CYP with ADHD and 40 614 CYP without ADHD. Medical records from GP, hospital diagnosis codes, and operative procedure codes have been extracted. A description of the reasons for attendance to healthcare in the 2 years prior to diagnosis (index date) will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion A detailed knowledge of reasons for attendance to healthcare for CYP with versus CYP without CYP will assist GPs, paediatrics, educationalists, and CYP's parents (carers) may help to identify ADHD earlier than is currently possible.